The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Footsteps.

In the quiet hour of gloaming,
When the hush is upon the earth,
When the stars gleam out and the low winds moan,
I sit and listen—listen alone,
By the side of the desolate hearth.

I listen, but not to the homeless leaves,
As they drift 'gainst the window pane;
Nor the soughing wind from the fir-crowned hill,
Nor the sigh and sob of the swollen rill,
Nor the whisper of careless rain.

I listen, I listen, and but to hear
The footsteps that fall around;
The footsteps that gladdened my life of yore,
The footsteps that seek my side no more,
That fall on no earthly ground.

The tiny steps of my first-born
Come pattering quick and soft;
He had trod like a man, had he stayed, by this,
Yet oh I yearn for the baby kiss,
He tottered to give so oft.

His firm tread rings out gallantly,
Just as it was wont to do,
When I used to spring from this same low seat,
The comer I loved the best to greet,
As he strode through the evening dew.

Slow and heavy, and quick and light
The echoes around me come,
The steps that through youth's gay footpaths ranged,
Of friends forgotton, of friends estranged,
Who once made life and home.

Ah well, poor salvage from the wreck
All memory saves and stores,
Yet the sounds that people the sweet Past's dreams
Are dearer to me than the light that gleams
On the lonely Present's shores.

Manchester College Pulpit. No. 4.

Free-will and Spiritual Freedom.

PREACHED IN MANCHESTER COLLEGE CHAPEL, JUNE 23rd, 1885, BY THE REV. C. B. UPTON, B.A.

ISAIAH, 45th chapter, part of the 9th verse:—"Woe unto him that striveth with his maker."

To man alone, amid created existences, is given the high prerogative of an independent will,—a certain amount of freedom of choice, whereby he can, in seasons of temptation, obey or resist the promptings of the Creative Spirit. Throughout all the rest of nature, animate and inanimate, the divine decrees pass without possible resistance into fulfilment, and hence the beauty and the harmony which are the predominant characteristics of earth and heaven. In tranquil order do the seasons pass through their majestic cycle of change, each one clad in its own special loveliness, and each by contrast lending to the others a fresh charm. The various tribes of living beings delight the eye with the symmetry of their form, or the beauty of their colouring; and their unerring instincts tell of the over-ruling reason which constantly guides, moulds, and controls their plastic natures.

But as the animal kingdom culminates in the structure of the human frame, a momentous change takes place in the relation of the Creative Spirit to the created man. Still does the moulding energy of the Eternal build up the wondrous framework of our bodies, and construct

the organs that reveal to us the presence and the influence of the external world; but man is no longer as the lower animals are, simply a sentient nature which receives impressions from without, and a source of movement which springs into activity at the stimulus of the sensations. Over and above these capacities and faculties there awakens into self-consciousness a rational and moral nature, and a self-determining will. In the progressive moral ideal which arises and develops in the soul of man, the Spirit of the Cosmos makes some authoritative revelation of the true end which each individual is summoned to achieve, of the part which each one of us is called upon to perform in the great drama of human existence. No longer, as in the case of the animals, does the indwelling spirit of the whole secure the carrying out of his own divine purpose, but rather does he leave to each one of us a certain range of free choice between following on the one hand our individual cravings and ambitions, and following on the other hand the guidance of that indwelling principle of righteousness and love, which is the living presence of God in the mind and heart.

In the case of man, then, a possibility arises which is not present in the case of the simply animal life. Man may, as our text says, "strive against his maker"; he may within certain limits resist the injunctions of the Ideal or the Father within him, and temporarily retard and disfigure the work in respect to which the self-revealing God invites his earnest co-operation. *Man* may strive against his maker which mere nature can never do. We should expect, then, to meet with a vast difference in those features of the phenomena of the universe which man has a share in fashioning; and what we have reason to expect we undoubtedly find. For when the eye of science and history in tracing the past history of our planet comes to that point where humanity appears upon the scene, an element entirely new at once burst upon the sight. So long as our studies have to do with nature alone we observe everywhere that the main drift and purpose of creation appear to be towards happiness and harmony, and that the comparatively small amount of pain and discord is, as the late J. S. Mill at length confessed, but an incidental and, perhaps, inevitable accompaniment, which is manifestly subordinate to the dominant benevolent purpose of the whole. But, as soon as we pass from nature to human nature, as soon as in the course of evolution humanity is reached, a change at once appears. What the nature of this change is, is best seen when we view mankind in its higher stages of culture, such as we find it in great cities and advanced conditions of civilization. Pass from the sweet quietude of country scenes, from a grand prospect on some mountain height, from the glorious vision of the face of ocean, or from the tranquillising and elevating influence of the star-lit heavens, into the inner life of human society, and the feeling of peace and harmony to a large extent vanishes. No longer does one all-pervading spirit give unity to the picture; no longer does one aim, the good of the whole, express itself constantly in the thoughts and actions of the rational members of creation; no longer does man necessarily obey that supreme guidance which asserts its authority in the reason, the conscience, and the heart. Not only among the grossly ignorant and the vicious do we find the deliberate pursuit of personal pleasure at the painful cost of lasting mischief to the individual's self and to his fellow-men, but even in the very *élite* of so-called society, how often may be seen essential selfishness, pride, and hardness of heart, clearly visible through the flimsy veneer of gracious politeness and verbal sentiment. No wonder that the hermits of old hastened oft-times from the culture of the cities to the rugged life of the wilderness, and that even Jesus sought the loneliness of the mountain-side when he would hold closest communion with the indwelling Father.

But while our great cities present these repulsive features which vividly show how capable man is of warring against his maker, they at the same time afford clearest evidence in every phase of society from the lowest to the highest, of the presence of those whose lives are really inspired and actuated by that mighty unifying principle of Divine Love, which is never wholly absent from human hearts, and which is ever striving to win to itself our individual wills, that the beauty and harmony of nature—or, rather, a far higher beauty and harmony—may be presented in human society, and thus the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven. In this contrast between the harmony of nature and the discords

of human life, we have, it seems to me, the clearest confirmation of our intuitive judgment that man in times of temptation is left free to choose between alternative decisions, and thus to become in some degree responsible for the kind of character he fashions for himself. And for my own part, I am utterly unable to see how those thinkers who tell us that there is no real freedom, no choice between alternatives, in our moral self-determinations, can possibly reconcile the present and past condition of mankind with the omniscience and omnipotence of a supreme being of infinite wisdom and love. If the sinful discords of Society are mainly due to man's free exercise of the power which God has conferred upon him of resisting his Maker, of acting in one way while the voice of God in his conscience wills him to act in another way, then it indeed becomes comprehensible that this grand faculty of freedom of choice should necessarily allow of that frequent and painful deviation from the moral ideal which forces itself upon our attention whether we look abroad over society, or take an inward glance into our own souls.

But if there be *no such alternative of choice* present in our moral decisions, if the actual course which a man takes in seasons of temptation is always the only possible and conceivable one under the circumstances, then, I say, the conclusion cannot be escaped that the Supreme Being to whom both nature and our characters are due, is directly and solely responsible for all these social sins and social discords; and while we should on this theory still view with admiration and gratitude His harmonious handiwork in nature, we should surely have to confess that in the construction of human society either the love or the power of God appears to be manifestly defective. If sin with its consequent sufferings and harrowing remorse is the inevitable outcome of the particular character which the sinner has inherited, and of the influence of his circumstances, then we may well ask, if He to whom men owe their character and their circumstances is indeed a being whose wisdom and whose love is infinite. If, however, we accept what our consciences directly declare and our text asserts, that man is capable of resisting, of striving with, his Maker, then this painful contrast between the predominant harmony of nature and the many fearful blots and discordances in the history and the life of man become, in large measure at least, explicable without at all impairing our faith, that the dominating Spirit of the Universe is the seat and source of perfect wisdom, and of perfect love. To the extent that the eternal Father confers real freedom of will on man, our reason tells us that it is inevitable that sin and its consequences should be possible; and the only question which the Theist has to answer is whether the great end for which this moral freedom exists, is an end worthy of that eternal wisdom and love which we believe to constitute the nature of God.

When we compare the beauty and symmetry of nature with the mischievous self-seeking and evil passions which too often disfigure human society, it may at the first superficial glance seem almost a matter for regret that we are not so constituted as to follow without the possibility of deviation the promptings of the Spirit of God, so that human life might be characterized by the same internal harmony and outward beauty which is manifested in the evolution of the vegetable and the animal world. Indeed, in our lower moods, when we forget the higher meaning and destiny of human existence, we are often inclined to view the present struggle, sins and disorders as wholly unnecessary and objectionable features in the universe, and the thought will arise that if free-will involves and entails so much sin and such wide-spread discord, whether it would not be better for us that we should sink into the scale of creatures entirely dependent upon the guidance of the Eternal, and so exempt from the perils and defects which accompany the present constitution of our nature. And indeed, this thought which is apt to haunt us all in our less spiritual moods, has been put forward by one of our most eminent scientific teachers as the result of his deliberate reflection. "I protest," says Professor Huxley, in a well-known passage, "that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true, and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I would instantly close with the offer."

Now on this I would remark that as Professor Huxley believes that there is no more real freedom of choice in man than there is in the animals, it is no wonder that he maintains that the universe,

though it appears to be, as he says, "a materialized rational process," certainly does not appear to be the work of a Spirit of infinite love. For holding, as he does, that the evolution of each human character is a necessary evolution, in which there is never really a choice between alternatives, he naturally regards man as a sort of clock, but as it is a clock which in running down often passes through the various phases of selfishness and sin, he considers it to be a badly constructed clock, or at least as a clock which infinite wisdom cannot have fashioned, for had it been so fashioned, it would have kept good and harmonious time, whereas this human clock-work very often goes wrong itself and misleads those who trust to it. This conclusion of Professor Huxley's is surely, as I have before pointed out, a very natural and indeed inevitable one, if once you come to distrust your moral consciousness and to hold that you possess no real freedom of moral choice in moments of temptation; for if human nature is really made in this fashion, it is hard to see how any rational being can call it well made. If we are constituted so that only one line of conduct is ever possible, it is assuredly only reasonable to expect from an all-wise and all-loving Creator that we should be so made that this single line of conduct should always be a correct and harmonious one and never a wrong and mischievous one. But, further, let us suppose that Professor Huxley's Utopia were realised, and that we were all so constituted that the moral decisions we come to should necessarily always be the very best both for our own happiness and for the happiness of society, would any really earnest and noble mind, on reflection, be willing to purchase this apparently very desirable condition of affairs at the cost which it would involve? I trow not. Professor Huxley forgets that if you turn a man, as he supposes, into a sort of mechanical consciousness through which another Power irresistibly works out His purposes, such a being would be utterly incapable of having any genuine conception of right and wrong, and would by the very necessity of its structure be debarred from all the highest modes of happiness, for it could enjoy none of those high moral and spiritual experiences which arise out of the consciousness that we have *voluntarily* sided with the Eternal Father within us, and hence can feel the sweet response of this approving sympathy.

More wisely than our scientific professor does the prophet Isaiah speak, when he represents Jahuch, as saying, "I, the Lord, form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." Yes, in the sense of forming beings of limited intelligence and free-agency, whose actions would certainly be often unwise, and often liable to be morally wrong, we may truly say, with the prophet, that the Lord creates evil. Not indeed in the sense of doing evil, for genuine moral evil is ever the work of our unfaithful wills; but in the sense of calling into existence rational beings who, on their way to a higher life of conscious personal sympathy with the Eternal, must of necessity pass through the preliminary stages of mistake, and be subject to temptations to deviate from the path which the indwelling presence of God declares to be noble and divine. Nor, I feel assured, will any one who at all adequately realizes the grand possibilities that are folded up in human nature be inclined in his higher moods to do other than thank God that our souls are not constituted in accordance with Professor Huxley's ideal pattern, but that we have a certain amount of delegated independence of action, whereby we are enabled to an important extent to modify our own characters, and so advance along or deviate from the path which leads to the heavenly goal of conscious communion and sympathy with the Eternal.

Being such as we are, we may be welcomed with God's responsive approval and love, as by noble moral effort we journey homewards, and earnestness and faithfulness of life admit us to real intimacy with the self-existent indwelling source of all that is true, and beautiful, and good. Thus do we move Godward and heavenward, as pilgrims who are seeking with more or less of prayerful diligence a sacred shrine, and not as machines or mere conscious phases on the general course of evolution, which have been driven along the iron road of destiny by a power or a fate which has left them no alternative of choice.

Amid all the defects and disappointments of life let us, then, take courage. All this disorder, which contrasts at times so harshly with God's unresisted activity in nature, exists as the indispensable condition of a sublimer order, a grander life, an inexpressibly greater richness of

soul. Without this moral training, without this possibility of retrogression as well as of progression, we should be *Creatures* of God, but *sons* of God we could never be. And we may well believe that it is because the Eternal himself in his infinite love seeks this responsive reverence and affection from the children of men as essential to his and their truest and deepest blessedness that he confers on man this high privilege and responsibility, and by the ascending ideal, which is his living presence in the individual soul, invites each one of us to climb the hills of moral endeavour that we reach the heaven of spiritual union and communion with the Father within us. God does not use us as mere vehicles of his own action. He gives us a measure of real spiritual independence, and *invites* us, not *compels* us, to become fellow-workers with him.

How beautiful, beyond description, are the spirits who have freely surrendered themselves to this divine invitation, who have wholly ceased to strive against the God-inspired Ideal in their minds and hearts, and whose meat and drink it is to do their heavenly Father's will. Such choice and God-beloved souls are to be found here and there in the lowest as well as the highest ranks of society, and wherever they come their influence is benignant and divine.

IF you mean to keep as well as possible the less you think about your health the better. Beyond a few simple rules let your health take care of itself. The people who are always feeling their own pulse and looking at their own tongue actually cultivate disease as other people cultivate roses or chrysanthemums.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS, JUNIOR, writes of his father:—"An extraordinary, eager, restless energy was never absent from my father all through his life. Whatever he did he put his whole heart into, and did as well as ever he could. Whether it was for work or for play, he was always in earnest. Painting the scenes for a toy theatre, dancing Sir Roger de Coverley at a children's party, gravely learning the polka from his little daughters for a similar entertainment, walking, riding, picnicking, amateur acting, public reading, or the every-day hard work of his literary life—it was all one to him. Whatever lay nearest to his hand at the moment had to be done thoroughly."

The Springs of Action.*

A SERMON BY THE

REV. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

"Many that are first shall be last; and the last first."—MARK x., 31.

There is in the most abstruse and difficult of all Dr. Martineau's works a certain table drawn up which has often struck me as of singular moral significance, well calculated to upset many of our confident judgments on ourselves and on one another. You know that his ethics, his philosophy of morals, has for its central idea the doctrine that all morality consists in choosing and acting on the worthier of any pair of motives that present themselves to one in competition at a given moment, and all immorality consists in choosing and acting on the less worthy. If, at a given moment, I have to choose between gratifying my love of knowledge by going on reading an article of Dr. Martineau's, or saving a child's life by rushing from my study into the street to snatch it off the roadway, down which a runaway horse is galloping, it is right to do the latter; because, though the love of knowledge is in itself an excellent motive, the sentiment of humanity is a motive better still. If, again, at a given moment, I have to choose between making a hundred pounds and dealing fairly by my neighbour, it is wrong to make the hundred pounds; because, though the love of gain may be in itself a legitimate motive enough, the love of honesty is certainly a higher one, and has the prior claim on my allegiance. I do not myself think that Dr. Martineau's doctrine, as it stands, will be found to provide us with an altogether adequate theory of morals. But that it is in the main true I do not question. And if it be so, you will see of what immense importance it must be, both theoretically and practically, to be quite clear about the actual place in the moral scale of the various motives upon which we may act,—to arrange them from the worst and lowest to the best and highest in the real order of their worth.

* Owing to the absence abroad of one of the editors an unfortunate mistake was committed in our last issue. The above sermon was printed under the name of the Rev. L. P. Jacks. We now reprint it with hearty apologies to its real author, the Rev. R. A. Armstrong.

Accordingly our great teacher provides us with a table embracing the whole range of our "springs of action," from the bottom to the top; and it is this table which I refer to as of startling significance, and well calculated violently to upset many of our confident moral judgments on ourselves and on each other,—showing great honour to be due to some to whom we seldom think of paying it; and severest condemnation to many to whom we have not usually accorded it. A commentary on the table might be packed in a nutshell in the words which I have taken for a text: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

Let us, then, glance at the table itself, remembering always that this is, according to one of the greatest, wisest, and most prophetic moral and spiritual teachers of this or any other age, the actual scale in order of worthiness of the springs of human conduct; that in his view the best and holiest of men would be he who most constantly acted from the motives at or near the top of the scale; and the worst and most wicked of men, would be he who most frequently acted from the motives at or near the bottom of the scale.

We can only look at the extremes. Highest but one we find compassion; highest of all—what think you?—reverence.

If that be true, imagine the great last day, as preachers and apostles have painted it, when God calls up for judgment the souls of all men. Highest of all and first of all, such as have been profoundly moved by reverence, and next to them the army of the compassionate. What strange partnerships will there be! How many heroes of history will be relegated to remoter ranks! Come forward, thou, Mazzini, thou, à Kempis, who reverenced much, the one with the reverence of a brave man whose reverence was set on high and free ideals, the other cherishing the timid reverences of the cloister; but both moved to the core of their being by reverence, and therefore of the first and noblest rank,—and we do not wonder. But come forward, also, thou, humble maiden, ignorant, unknown, who yet didst treasure amid thy superstitions and thy petty outlook a deep reverence for what seemed to thee good and holy,—come forward thou, also, for thou art of the same company, the foremost rank of humanity.

And next to reverence, compassion. Come forward, Francis of Assisi, thou who didst love the birds and call the beasts of the forest thy brothers and thy sisters. Come forward, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, who gave yourselves daily a living sacrifice for the prisoners. And come forward, also thou, the little child who didst pity a bird with broken wing or wast sorry for the beggar in the way. Thou art of the same company: take thy place with the noble philanthropists, the saviours and redeemers of men.

But, after all, we all of us instinctively place compassion high in the scale of human motives. And if it would hardly have occurred to us to set reverence at the very summit, as the very coping-stone and crown of human character, no spiritually-minded man is unsusceptible to the wonderful charm and beauty which a deep religious reverence lends to a human soul.

It is, then, rather at the lower than at the higher end of the scale that surprise overtakes us. For at the very bottom, as the very worst of human motives, the tabulation places springs of action which are of everyday occurrence in ordinary social circles. We should have expected at the bottom of the scale those horrible propensions which point straight to red murder and ruthless crime. The great criminals we assume to be the worst of men. But if Dr. Martineau be right, then the really worst of men are not necessarily those conspicuous violators of the pact of society; but rather those who lead self-indulgent lives among us; and baser still, those who by sins of tongue and heart darken the social atmosphere around them. For lowest but one among springs of conduct he sets down love of ease, and lowest of all he sets that hateful trio, censoriousness, vindictiveness, suspiciousness.

Love of ease, the lowest but one of human motives, the basis of the lowest order of character save one! Such is the judgment—calm, deliberate, reasoned—of our teacher. Think just what that means! How often amongst our young men that love of ease is the excuse for declining all kinds of undertakings pressed upon them! This one cannot think of becoming a Sunday-school teacher simply for love of ease. That one shirks this or that committee solely from love of ease. Dr. Martineau is not a man

who will place very high in the scale of motives love of gain or love of power. But love of gain he sets three whole grades higher than love of ease, and love of power three whole grades higher still. So that, according to him, to choose ease rather than gain, when these two only are the competing motives in the breast, is to make a base and ignoble choice; while to choose ease in like case in preference to power is an act of wickedness which, habitually repeated, will rank a man with the lowest dregs of his species. This is not my judgment, but that of the greatest ethical thinker of our time; and I commend it to such as are letting this same lethargic love of ease creep over their manhood and debase them in the scale of our humanity.

But now glance at the lowest grade of all,—the nethermost pit of human motive, according to our teacher, than which in all the black record of human sin there neither is nor can be motive more degraded, inspiration more unutterably base. "Censoriousness, vindictiveness, suspiciousness,." Can any of us say that none of these has found lodging in our bosoms, shaped itself into word or deed in our lives? Yet if one of this triad has at any time controlled and moulded our action, then we—even we—have touched the lowest level of human character and shown ourselves kin with the worst of our race.

Two of these springs of action seem very closely allied, perhaps hardly distinguishable from each other—censoriousness and suspiciousness. The other, vindictiveness, is of a somewhat different character, though Dr. Martineau links all three together as the very worst of which the human heart is capable. Vindictiveness, when we recognise it as such, is hateful to all of us, and there is not one of us who would not try to root it out of his heart if he perceived that it was there. And yet I think it mixes very subtly in men's dispositions, and often plays an active part where its presence is not suspected. The twist and colour given to the report of a conversation, the intonation of a speech making pretence of candour or even of generosity, will often reveal there, lurking in the recesses, this ugly passion of vindictiveness. The desire to inflict pain in return for some pain received was held in heathendom not incompatible with brave and noble living. But it is the sheer and absolute contradiction of that new way of life revealed to men by Jesus Christ. And its approach to the gates of the heart is so cunning, so quiet, so subtle, that many let it in without detecting it. We ought all to be on the look-out for its intrusion, and to turn it out neck and crop if ever we discover it within the citadel.

But many who fully recognise how ugly and wicked a thing is the vindictive temper, are not alive to the baseness of the censorious and suspicious temper. Censoriousness, indeed, when we call it by that long grave name, sounds bad enough. But when we translate it into "the love of fault-finding," which is exactly what it means, why, most of us are inclined to think it a trivial matter; and few indeed of us will be prepared, with Dr. Martineau, to put it down there at the very bottom of human motive, to regard it as a passion worse than the greed that tempts the robber, a passion to be classed as the vilest of all those which the Apostle sums up as world, and flesh, and devil.

Love of finding fault: which of us has not at least sometimes shown that disposition? When you hear your neighbour praised, do you never feel a certain pleasure in giving but a half assent, and hinting at certain items on the other side which should detract from the laudation? Truth may indeed compel you to point out faults; but the baseness is in finding therein a secret pleasure. You hear of the public munificence of a fellow citizen; yes, say you, but see how shabbily he treated his poor relations. Or you suggest that after all the love of display had as much to do with this ostensible generosity as any zeal for the public good. You are talking of some acquaintance who has shown enthusiasm in some good work; yes, say you, but after all she makes rather a show of her benevolence. Now that may be true, or it may be untrue. Most likely it is an entirely baseless fancy of your own. But the mischief is, whether it be true or untrue, in your taking pleasure in taking the shine out of her reputation. That is censoriousness, and it belongs to the nethermost pit of character; and suspiciousness is its twin-sister. The habit of thinking there must be an unworthy element behind all that appears worthy, honourable, and pure,—that is suspiciousness, and it is at once among the commonest and the most ignoble of the human

heart. It is good that every one of us should now and again try hard to get outside himself and take a fair and unbiassed view of the elements working in his own heart; and in the solemn candour of an awakened conscience, decide whether there be or be not within him any one of that unholy tried suspiciousness, censoriousness, vindictiveness.

And, indeed, whether or no you be prepared, with Dr. Martineau, to declare those three to be the very most debased of all possible springs of human conduct, you must, I think, agree with me that they are sources of social and domestic unhappiness which it would be hard to parallel. There is, I suppose, no one within these four walls who estimates the sum of human misery produced by drink at a higher figure than myself. On that subject I have been deemed by some of you a fanatic. Yet I hesitate to say which is the parent of a more prolific progeny of sorrows, that awful drink curse or these unseen factors of our social life. What a blight they are! How they darken the home! What a gloom they cast upon the spirit! How they take the heart out of upward effort, and rob households of the spring of joy! How they shut up sympathy, and dull the edge of love! They are like the east wind after a spell of bright spring sunshine and genial rain. These have brought the flowers out upon the fruit trees in glorious profusion, and under the tender petals the fruit itself is on the verge of forming, when one dark night, the blast sweeps through the meadows and the orchards, and lo, next morning, the pink and milk-white promise is all turned to blackness on the boughs, and the hope of the harvest is dead. So is it often in a family when censoriousness and suspiciousness enter in. The tender blooms of trust and sympathy and love, from which alone the fruitage of beautiful character can grow, cannot stand the pinching chill, and the flowers are withered on the stalk. And the angels sorrow in heaven over a household that should have been a nest of mutual happiness, and is turned to a storehouse of recrimination and a treasury of bitterness.

Ah! let us all think and say the best of one another that we can. Let us believe in the good motive till we are forced to believe in the bad. Let us believe—for it is true—that men and women are much more often better than they seem than worse. When men do good let us believe that it is from love of good. When they seem kind, let us believe that they are kind indeed. Yes, and when they seem unkind, or cold, or inconsiderate, let us try all we can to believe that this is only in appearance, that their hearts are rooted in the soil of kindliness and love, and that it is some defect in us ourselves that makes them seem less brotherly or sisterly than we would have them be. So shall we save ourselves from much bitterness that eats into the heart, and so shall we shed around us the sunshine in which all that is good will grow, and all that is gross and evil will fade and decay and die.

Reminiscences of Norway.

Norway is a wonderful place for refreshing both the body and the mind. I have heard it sometimes said that the great stream of tourists has now overrun the country and spoilt its charm. That idea is quite mistaken. The country is far too vast in extent to be overrun by the largest number of tourists ever likely to go there, and it contains so great a variety of beautiful and interesting spots as to remove all danger of it ever becoming vulgarized into a show-place for "view-hunters." If you were to take a map of Norway, you might cover the places that have been spoilt with the points of half-a-dozen pins, which does not count for much in a country which is more than a thousand miles from north to south and everywhere beautiful.

A visit to Norway begins and ends with a two-days' voyage across the North Sea, an incident which, to me, is always one of the most interesting and pleasant of the journey. A fine steamship is a wonderful thing—a marvellous testimony to the genius and ability of the human race—a theme to make one ponder and praise God. To begin with, the ship itself brings to remembrance the debt one owes to one's fellow-creatures. Thanks to the perfection of its mechanism, thanks to the wonderful order and vigilance which long training has bred in the seamen, you may cross what would otherwise be a most dangerous sea, not only in safety, but even in luxurious comfort. To what do you owe this? Not to the money you have paid for your passage. Our grandfathers would

have paid twice as much, and they would have made the voyage amid danger and discomforts, tenfold as great. You owe it to long labours and experiments of your fellow-men which have for ages, battled with the difficulties of navigation, until at last, after a thousand mistakes and imperfections, experience has evolved what meets the case. Other men have laboured, and you have entered into the fruits of their labours. Again, a steamer contains, within a narrow compass, a wonderfully complete epitome of the great world. All classes of society are represented in the roll of passengers from steerage to cabin and all types of labour from the highly skilled labour of the captain and officers to the unskilled and perhaps degrading labour of the stokers and the menials of the ship. Not only are all the different classes present, but there, in a ship not 300 feet long, they live in just the same ignorance of each other as they do in great cities. In one compartment there are a body of grimy stokers sweating at their toil, and in another place only separated by a few boards and a few feet of space a company of leisured well-to-do saloon passengers, feasting on the fat of the land, and as ignorant of all that is going on in the ship as if it were taking place on the other side of the globe. All the characteristic features of a great city have their parallel in a great steamer. It is true you do not see a church with a public-house next door. But you may see a bishop sitting down to dinner with a gambler on one side of him and a wealthy publican on the other. It may be counted one of the recommendations of Norway, as a holiday resort, that you begin and end your journey with so compressed and so suggestive an object-lesson in the conditions of modern life.

When travelling in Norway you feel a great want of that historical interest which gives so much added charm to travelling in England and France and Germany. It seems as though the country had afforded very scanty opportunities for the enacting of those great enterprises which make human history. You understand why Norway has this want when you ascend to the summit of one of the great mountains and look at the scene below you. Then you see that Norway is for the most part a great wilderness—a desert—grand, impressive, and beautiful, but not fitted to become a home for those great busy populations whose life constitutes human history. You see before you a vast extent of uninhabitable mountains, intersected by deep, broad gulfs, along which the sea finds its way for hundreds of miles into the heart of the country. The signs of humanity are conspicuous more by their absence than their presence. All that man has done has been just to scratch a foothold on the green ledges, where the in-coming arms of the sea touch the slopes of the mountains. You instinctively feel that this region was not intended for man; you see that the necessary stage for the great drama of history is wanting, and a sense creeps over you as though you were an intruder on scenes which the great elements of Nature have reserved as their own. What a different impression one gets when one looks round on an English landscape! You perceive at once that this land was meant to be *peopled;* your imagination fills it with all the incidents and interests of the life of man; you expect it to have a story; you feel the past linked with the present, and nature linked with humanity.

And yet, after all, Norway does carry us back to the past—not to the comparatively short past of human history, but to the infinitely longer past when the world was in the making. Its scenery carries you back, not a hundred years, but a hundred thousand. You step out of the modern world into the Ice Age; you are in the workshop of Nature, and you see around a region which has hardly yet been turned out of hand by the great forces of fire and water, of ice and snow and thundering torrent which fashion the outlines of the earth—nay, you actually see these forces—all except the fire—still splitting and grinding and polishing and heaping together their products. It is a primeval world; nature has not finished her rude building operations; the creative powers have not yet removed their heaps of earth-rubbish, and sometimes you may find yourself in scenes of such utter gloom and desolation, vast wildernesses of black rocks, and angry waters, and thick-ribbed ice, that after a time the spirits become oppressed, and the mind begins to long for the finished culture of the English fields.

These impressions belong to the mountain summits, and they present an aspect of Norway which many travellers to Norway do not see,

because they confine themselves to the valleys and the fjords. There, by the sea level, one sees endless beauty of another sort. A fjord is simply a great mountain valley filled with the waters of the ocean. The deep sea winds its arms around the roots of the high mountains. It is a wonderful combination of all the beauty that belongs to the land and the water—such, perhaps, as is to be found in no other part of the world. Certainly, I know of no country where the union of the sea and the mountains is so close. There are ten thousand places where one of the giants of Norse mythology might have leapt from a mountain top into blue sea water hundreds of fathoms deep.

It is by the fjords that one sees to best advantage the characteristic life of a Norwegian peasantry. The bulk of the population consists of peasants, most of them poor but independent, owning the land they till, which, although it is both small in amount and scantily productive, yields them enough for their wants and saves them from all that frightful uncertainty as to the future which makes half the evil of a poor man's life in England. Poverty exists among the peasantry sometimes in extreme forms, but even in its extremest form I have never known it other than cleanly and decent and associated with a self-respecting manhood.

One of the great charms of travelling in Norway is the comparative freedom one enjoys from the avarice of one's fellow-men. You can stay at an hotel in Norway without feeling that you are a mere sponge to be squeezed at the will of the landlord. English people who visit the country all bear testimony to the honesty and simplicity of the inhabitants, though I have known of a good many cases where my fellow-countrymen have been more disposed to take advantage of these qualities than to imitate them. On one occasion, after staying some time in an hotel where I was very kindly and handsomely treated, I was astonished at the smallness of the bill. I expressed my astonishment to the landlord—who was a peasant—and the conversation ended in his telling me that he did not keep the hotel for profit, but in order that he might continue to exercise the customary hospitality of the land to strangers. When you meet with such people you have visions of a renovated society. You perceive that the notion of some inherent necessity in the human nature which makes every man a money-grubber is a false notion.

I do not wish you to think, by any means, that all hotels are kept on that principle, but some are, and in those cases ones chief difficulty is to avoid unnecessarily taking advantage of the immense good nature of which one is the object. I regret to say that one or two instances came to my knowledge where advantage was so taken, and where it would be an altogether needless straining of charity to say it was done unconsciously.

Speaking of ones fellow-travellers, the Englishman abroad is always a suggestive subject of study. Whether one is fond of moralizing or not he certainly suggests one or two moral facts which are worth notice. The end and aim of the travelling Englishman is openly and avowedly the pursuit of happiness. At home it is different. There he is occupied with his business whatever it may be, and although he may do his business with an indirect view to this happiness, yet certainly he has other concerns than merely to increase the sum total of his pleasures. But when he goes abroad he deliberately lays himself out to make himself as happy as possible. And consequently a crowd of tourists afford the best opportunity one could have for noting the delusions that prompt men to this pursuit and the failures that attend it. I am far from saying that this deliberate pursuit of happiness at holiday time never succeeds, but I know it often fails, and I think that anyone may satisfy himself that there are very strict limits to its success. At any rate the impression I bring back with me from foreign travel is that this deliberate pursuit of happiness does not improve men's temper, their manners or their morals. It has the reverse effect. It intensifies the natural selfishness of the human heart. When men are at home there is plenty of reckless disregard of the rights and the comforts of other people; but when they are abroad there is more of it. Carried along by an unabashed determination to squeeze out the last drop of pleasure for themselves, they give rein to a spirit of uncompromising individualism, and it is saddening and sometimes amusing to note to what an extent this spirit leads them to get in each other's way, and so to cancel each

other's enjoyment. Experience of travel constantly forces one to reflect that unless some higher principle than the personal pursuit of happiness were at work in great communities, it would be impossible for men to live together and act together. When I was a student I was led away for a time by a school of thinkers who teach that happiness intelligently pursued is the right end of all human action. If nothing else had convinced me of the error in this view, what I have since seen of the travelling public would have done so. The pursuit of personal happiness is not only theoretically discredited but it is an absolutely impossible end for men who must live together if they live at all.

Again, in travelling you see many instances which prove this important proposition—that you need something more than a change of scene to make a true holiday. A petty minded person, an evil-tempered person, a censorious person will gain little good from visiting a new country. In spite of beautiful surroundings and fine pure air such a person will continue to find that life is full of annoyance and irritation. Something will always be going wrong even though he should plant himself in the loveliest spot of earth. Going abroad makes no real change for him, because he carries into the new scene the spirit that ruled him in the old, and that spirit stamps its wretched quality on everything he sees and does, and makes the scenes, which he has gone a thousand miles to visit, just as uncongenial as that which he might have got from his own front door. The only change which will do such a person good, either in body or soul, is not to visit a new country, but to rise into a higher atmosphere of thought and feeling, to stay at home and school himself, to take wider views and exercise a more generous tolerance, and become more superior to the small annoyances of life. Hence it is that many a quiet unselfish spirit that gets no holiday at all will derive more happiness and more health for mind and body, amid the monotonous surroundings of some suburban neighbourhood, than the restless egotist whom wealth and leisure have enabled to roam round the world.

L. P. JACKS.

A great deal of talent is lost to the world for want of a little courage.

Duties and Responsibilities of Educated Women.

There are some among us who are afraid of the higher education that is being given in our age to woman, lest it have an injurious effect on her domestic nature and upon the home.

If there is really danger here, we ought to tread very thoughtfully; for the home is so precious a product of our civilization that anything which threatens it may well awaken our solicitude.

Will the higher education prove a friend, or will it prove an enemy to the home? I confess I see the possibility of its proving an enemy,—a thing which may grow to be hated by men, a destroyer of the domesticity of woman, a foe to marriage, a curse to children. Indeed, this is what it will be if it makes women selfish, if it develops the intellect and neglects the moral nature, if it stimulates the brain and dries up the heart, if it cares only for the ornamental and neglects the practical in life.

Instead of producing any such results, however, I am sure it *ought* to prove the *best friend* to the home. No woman in all the world is so well qualified to lift up a home to its best as an educated woman, if her education be what it ought to be. There is nothing about her home that should not feel the magic of her enlarged knowledge. Pantry and parlour, nursery and library alike, should be benefited by it. Her kitchen should be the model kitchen of the neighbourhood. The food served in her dining-room should be the best cooked and the most healthful. The economy of her wardrobe should be the most intelligent and perfect, the hospitality of her home the most gracious and beautiful. Sometime it will be so. In the home of many an educated woman it is so now.

No woman in all this world can be so much to a husband—so helpful, so inspiring, so charming, with charms that can never fade or pass away—as a woman of education and culture, so only that the culture be large, and true and deep—a culture of the whole nature, and not of a mere fragment.

No woman can be such a mother to children as an educated woman. All the knowledge she has is wealth to pour into her children's lives. All the culture she possesses of mind and heart is

seed of priceless worth which she may plant in their deepest natures, to bear fruit in them forever. All the intellectual and moral furnishing which she has gained will give her a just so much deeper and more enduring place in their regard and love and homage as long as they live.

But if the higher education is a friend to marriage, and to the home which marriage creates, it is also a friend, the truest ever found, to those women who never marry, and who, therefore, in one way or another, must make homes for themselves. There is no greater curse to woman's life than that sentiment, which is in many minds, that a woman's life cannot be a success unless she marries. Do not misunderstand me. I would say no word against marriage, but everything for it, when it can he consummated under right conditions. But a hundred times better is it never to marry than to marry under wrong conditions. No woman's life a success unless she marries? Think of such lives as those of Louisa Alcott, Dorothea Dix, the Cary sisters, Prof. Maria Mitchell, Mary Somerville, Caroline Herschel, Frances Power Cobbe, Frances Willard! Are there any more successful or more beautiful lives known to the world than these, and such as these? Where fitting opportunities for marriage do not come, or in cases where women desire, as many do, and honourably may, to live their own lives in their own way, and mark out independent careers for themselves, the higher education enables them to do this as otherwise they could not.

Another thought. It should never be forgotten that the advantages of extended education do not come to all. The young women who can go to college are few: those who cannot are many. Indeed, those who can get an higher education of any kind are really the few; while those who must go through life with little if any more knowledge of books than they can obtain from the common school, if even so much as that, are the many. In view of this fact, what should be the attitude of her to whom the higher privileges have come? Surely, it should be one of the utmost sympathy and helpfulness.

It lies largely with literary and college women to say whether the opportunities for culture that have come to them shall be simply the heritage of a few favoured ones, or whether they shall be extended more and more widely to all classes,—whether these opportunities shall be confined to the wealthy, or at least to those with considerable means, or whether they shall be placed within the reach of the poorest.

All this at least indirectly suggests that one of the grave problems of the future, which educated women must help solve, if it is ever to be solved at all, is that of the continued tyranny of fashion. Shall fashion go on tyrannizing over human life, especially over woman's life in the future, to the degree that it has done in the past? To think that this yoke of bondage is never to be broken is intolerable. But, if it is to be broken, by whom must it be done? Surely, the leaders in this great cause of human emancipation must be educated women. What is their knowledge for, only to fit them to be leaders in the onward progress of the race?

This thought of woman as an emancipator and a social reformer suggests her relation to that most pressing social and moral reform of our generation, the cause of temperance. Can any intelligent woman, or man either, doubt that the most dangerous single enemy to-day to the American people, to our politics, to our social life, to our religion, to our young men, to our homes, to woman, is the saloon? Am I wrong in believing that it is to women, and primarily to educated women, that we must look for the ultimate destruction of the saloon? Women do not drink, therefore the saloon cannot throw its spell around them, and make them blind to its evils. Women are the mothers of the boys whom the saloon ruins, the wives of the men whom it destroys. On women its severest blows fall. It is cheering to see that women are already banded against it in an organization the strongest and most active that exists. I am sure that in them largely lies our hope. Let not our educated women fail to be leaders here, in this most important, this most urgent moral reform that we have before us to-day, or are likely to have for a hundred years!

This brings me close to another subject of grave concern to society at large. I think it is becoming increasingly plain that educated women must take a very important part in the work of helping to bridge the chasm that exists between the rich and the poor, between capital and labour, if that chasm is ever to be bridged. Already the chasm is very wide and deep. And evidently it

grows no narrower. A great many schemes have been devised to bridge it, but seemingly there is little promise in any of them. As Ruskin insists, what is needed above everything else is "gentleness and justice." But, oh, it is so hard to get these! How these can be promoted is the great question. The rich man must be helped to learn that he is "his brother's keeper," and therefore that he must care for the poor. The poor man must be helped to form the habit of looking at matters from the standpoint of the rich, as well as from his own. How is this to be brought about? In effecting it, religion must have its part; the schools must have their part; the political economists, with their figures and their theories, must have their part; the labour leagues and associations of working-men must have their part. But woman, too, must have her very influential and important part. The world has no other so eloquent pleader for gentleness and justice as woman. If it is true that she has unequalled power to create false and cruel social distinctions, and to alienate class from class by fashion and pride, it is still more deeply true that she has unequalled skill and power to remove social distinctions that are false and wrong, and to draw men together by the might of her divine sympathy and love. To this great work she must consecrate herself more earnestly than ever she has done. And the leaders in the holy consecration should be our women of highest culture and largest influence.

A single other thought. I am sure there is a great work for educated women to do for *religion*. I do not mean simply in discharging the ordinary duties which religion lays upon them: that is a matter of course; but I mean something beyond that. I mean the work—perhaps the most important of a strictly religious kind, that now waits to be done in the Christian world—of removing and putting away out of sight the things that divide the Christian Church into antagonistic sects, the things that keep the followers of Christ from being a united, loving, and co-operating brotherhood.

Jesus prayed that his followers might be one. How great is the pity and shame that the fulfilment of this prayer is so long delayed! What causes the delay? What is it that separates between sect and sect, between church and church? It is dogmas. It is creeds. But whence comes these creeds and dogmas? From Christ? No. From humanity? No. They come from a *part* of humanity,—from a *fragment*,—from the masculine half, with the feminine half left out. They come from the cold brains of schoolmen and celibates, warmed by no touch of woman's gentler and more loving nature. The creeds of Christendom are all man-made things, and hence are hard, logical, stern, unsympathetic, speculative, remote from life,—unlovely characteristics which always tend to appear in man and his work whenever he separates himself from woman's life and love. Such creeds can never do anything else but divide the Christian Church. The elements which woman would have contributed are wanting in them,—namely, love, tenderness, sympathy. These are eternally uniting elements. I do not wonder that Oliver Wendell Holmes writes:—

> "Would that the heart of woman warmed our creeds!
> Not from the sad-eyed hermit's lonely cell,
> Not from the conclave where the holy men
> Glare on each other, as with angry eyes
> They battle for God's glory and their own,
> Till, sick of wordy strife, a show of hands
> Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn,—
> Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
> The Father's voice that speaks itself divine!
> Love must be still our Master: till we learn
> What he can teach us of a woman's heart,
> We know not His whose love embraces all."

Love is woman's gift to religion, as it is preeminently her gift to the world. As woman's influence grows in all the churches, the love element is certain to grow. And, as love comes forward into the foreground, dogmas that have in them no love, but only cruelty, will tend more and more to pass away; and then the followers of Christ, of all names and of no name, will begin at last to draw together as brothers. But all this must be largely woman's work. It will come when woman gets her true place—as all these new opportunities for intelligence that are coming to her are helping her to get it—by man's side—by his side not alone in the pew, but in the pulpit; not alone in the prayer meeting, but in the ecclesiastical council. That day is slowly approaching. The world's steady progress toward the light insures its arrival sooner or later. When it comes, then, but I believe not before, may we look for the fulfilment of the Master's prayer that all his followers *may be one*.

J. T. SUNDERLAND.

Wise and Quaint.

Sunday is the day on which I rise the earliest in order to have as much as possible of its peace and sweetness. In these soft unfretted moments causes of irritation seem less than they did yesterday: the bent bow of half-angry energy is relaxed; the mist of passion has time to thin away a little: I come to the end of the gentle day with a pang, and go to bed with a regretful thought that to-morrow is Monday.

There are a great many people who do not recognise their own portrait, even when drawn by the most skilful hand. A preacher or a novelist describes a character to the life, and the man whose exact photograh it is never imagines it is himself. Who can forget what Mr. Dickens somewhere said upon this subject:—"I have had Mrs. Nickelby, sitting opposite me in the flesh, ask if I thought there really ever was such a person?"

Mankind are always happier for having been happy: so that if you make them happy now, you make them happy twenty years hence by the memory of it.

A shy person not only *feels* pain, but *gives* pain; but, what is the worst, he incurs blame for a want of that rational and moral confidence which is so useful to those who possess, and so pleasant to those who witness. I am severe against shyness, because it looks like a virtue without *being* a virtue. It passes for modesty, whereas it is really a diseased egotism.

Words are an amazing barrier to the reception of truth.

Learn from the earliest days to inure your principles against the perils of ridicule: you can no more exercise your reason, if you live in the constant dread of laughter, than you can enjoy your life if you are in the constant terror of death.

The mortification of having to say one has been wrong is a mere drop compared with the flood of delight which attends the substitution of a new truth for an old error.

The King of Siam was not wholly wrong who showed the over-zealous missionary the various leaves on the trees of his garden. "Prove to me," he said, "that God has made two leaves absolutely alike, and then I may listen to you when you say that He has made two souls alike, and requires that they should worship Him absolutely in the same way."

As the churches in Jerusalem—Greek and Nestorian, Latin, Copt, and Maronite—all open into the Holy Sepulchre, while yet none are permitted to monopolise the shrine, so must we believe that out of every sect there is a way into the Holy of Holies.

Can anyone suggest means to abate the nuisance of unnecessary chatter? Suppose, as a first step, we establish a new grand Total Silence Society! Some one has calculated that every Englishman talks three hours and forty-five minutes and twelve seconds in every twenty-four hours, and every woman double the quantity. What an economy of time it will be at one stroke to suppress all this wicked waste! How many thousand fibs will be left untold? How many scolded maids and hen-pecked husbands will enjoy perpetual respite? How sound will be the slumber of Mr. Caudle! In a word, what moral regeneration of society must needs ensue if men and women will enrol themselves in the Total Silence Society!

It is all very well for divines to tell us "to love our neighbours." But to ask us to love the people who are only divided from us by nine inches of porous brick, and whose daughters practice on an out-of-tune piano from seven in the morning till eleven at night, is to require of human nature something exorbitant. He who can do it puts in the shade Howard, and Fénélon, and Mrs. Fry. Every Sunday afternoon my neighbour and his family sing hymns to a stumbling accompaniment on the piano, the father trying to put in an impromptu tenor, and the mother a worse alto, while the little darlings scream the air. And, sure enough, before the entertainment concludes they sing "Here we suffer grief and pain." Dear neighbours! We do—we do!

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Disobedience.

Says he, "I'll take my father's gun,
Obedience is absurd ;
And would not it be awful fun
If I could shoot a bird ! "
Says she, "A bird you cannot shoot,"
Says he, "But, if I can ? "
Says she, "You'll feel just like a brute."
Says he, "No ; like a man ! "

"And when my father shoots," says he ;
"Who speaks a word of blame ?
And very 'cute that bird must be
That can elude my aim !
And am not I my father's son,
Heir to my father's skill ?
Says you—You shall not touch his gun,
Says I,—Bedad, I will ! "

Says she, "Your honour you forget ;
What ! do it on the sly ? "
Says he, "That little sermonet
Is really all my eye !
For if a fellow went to speak
And promulgate such views
You'd be the first to call it 'cheek,'
And tremble in your shoes."

"And with my faithful comrade Shag,
(Dear dog, beloved of all !),
I rather think I'll fill a bag,
That's the reverse of small ;
The noble dog looks in my face
With his true, honest eyes,
And wags his tail with placid grace
And barks his glad surprise."

Then with that merry laugh of his
He waved the gun on high,
And sang, "Ye birds, that whirr and whiz,
Ye little think it's I !
Ye birds that whiz and whirr for me,
That whirr and whiz," he sang,
I've got my father's gun, you see,
And won't I make it bang ! "

Oh ! when the wrong we once begin,
How can we grasp the right ?
He thought it such a little sin,
And such a large delight ;
He thought it such a little sin,
A merry "lark" at most ;
But when the wrong we once begin,
How can we count the cost ?

A movement indolent and rash,
Half earnest, half in joke,
A sudden shock, a deadly crash,
A cloud of lurid smoke—

The noble dog lies there in pain,
His life-blood streaming fast,
Oh ! life that cannot come again,
Soon reckon'd with the past.

The noble dog looks up at him
With his true honest eyes,
Poor eyes that now are waxing dim,
Large limbs that may not rise ;
The friendly ever-wagging tail
Moves faintly to and fro ;
In life or death, Shag could not fail
To greet his master so !

In mute despair his master stands
Wishing his work undone ;
The gun has fallen from his hands,
The wicked, tempting gun !
He kneels beside him on the floor,
Striving to soothe his pain ;
If tears and kisses could restore,
Poor Shag would rise again !

Too late, with vain remorse, he sees
The fault that wrought the ill ;
Had he obey'd his sire's decree,
Shag had been living still !
Poor Shag ! who seems to understand
The sorrow in his eyes,
And kindly licks his master's hand,
Though by that hand he dies.

Oh, children ! in these days of ours
Fairies have vanished,
I think that they have lost their power—
I fear they all are dead.
But when this boy was doing wrong
(Which its own sorrow brings),
Fairies were very young and strong,
And did amazing things !

So when he bound the bleeding side,
And kiss'd the fainting nose,
Just when poor Shaggie should have died
The fairies interpose !
But, children, we must recollect
Faires no more appear ;
If we do wrong, we must expect
That it will cost us dear !

And though Shag's wound was soon forgot,
The boy was still to blame ;
And had poor Shaggie ne'er been shot,
The fault was still the same.
Whate'er may be the consequence,
Whether we lose or win,
The sin of disobedience
Is a most fearful sin.

Rev. Stopford Brooke.

Deep and widespread regret has been caused by the announcement that Rev. Stopford Brooke has decided to finally close Bedford Chapel, where for more than fifteen years his preaching has been a source of spiritual life and moral inspiration to vast numbers of people. We are glad to learn that this decision is not caused by any fresh failure of health, Mr. Brooke's long rest in Italy having restored him, after his last illness, to his accustomed vigour. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Mr. Brooke's noble utterance will for many years be heard in the cause of spiritual religion.

Goethe and the Wrens.

"Last summer," said Eckermann to Goethe, "I took two young wrens, which had probably only just left their nest, for they sat upon a twig with seven other young ones in a row, and the old bird was feeding them. I put the young birds in my silk pocket handkerchief and went towards Weimar, as far as the shooting-house. Here I thought I had a quiet spot to look once more at the wrens. But when I opened my handkerchief they both slipped out and disappeared in the grass. Three days afterwards I returned to the same place, and, hearing the note of a robin, guessed there was a nest in the place, which, after looking about, I really found. But how great was my astonishment when I saw in this nest besides the young robins, nearly fledged, my two young wrens, which had established themselves very comfortably. Since you are so cunning, I thought to myself, and since the good robins have taken such care of you, I should be very sorry to destroy this hospitable intimacy; on the contrary, I wish you the greatest possible prosperity."

"That is one of the best ornithological stories I ever heard," said Goethe. "Whoever hears that and does not believe in God will not be aided by Moses and the prophets. That is what I call the omnipresence of the Deity, who has everywhere spread and implanted a portion of his love, and has intimated in the brute, as a germ, what only blossoms to perfection in man."

No greater exercise of Christian forbearance can be imagined than *not* to say "I told you so."

News from the Field.

BANBURY *(Christchurch Chapel, Horse Fair).*—On Wednesday afternoon and evening, July 31st, the scholars of the above Sunday School had their annual treat on the lawn and grounds of the chapel. An excellent tea of cake and bread and butter was served out to them at four o'clock. During the afternoon and evening the young people enjoyed themselves with recreation, games, swinging, etc., to their hearts' content. Sweets, nuts, etc., were scrambled for at intervals during the evening Mr. Ernest Samuelson again very kindly lent his swings, and these were much enjoyed by the children. The teachers and a fair number of parents and friends were present, and had tea with the scholars. The weather was fortunately favourable, and a very pleasant and happy time was spent together.

BIRMINGHAM *(Church of the Messiah).*—Mr. Jacks has returned from his holiday and resumed work. Mr. Tranter, the Home Missionary, has just started for a two months' trip in the United States, whither he carries with him the hearty good wishes of all his friends.

LYE.—On Sunday, July 28th, the annual floral festival was held at this church, on behalf of the Sunday School treat. The scholars of the Sunday School took the most prominent part in the services, and the songs, duets, choruses, recitations, and dialogues rendered by them were in harmony with the character of the services, and were much appreciated by the large congregations who attended. The Rev. I. Wrigley conducted the services. The church was beautifully decorated with the floral tributes of the congregation. Mr. Pardoe, to whom the credit is due for the success of the musical part of the service, presided at the organ, and the choir sang with good effect the anthem, "O all ye works of the Lord." The collections amounted to about £4 5s.—The day following the scholars of the Sunday School held their annual treat in a field kindly lent by Mrs. Jones. After being regaled, in the open air, with cake and buns, and unlimited quantities of tea, the children and their friends took full advantage of the opportunity which the occasion and the fine weather afforded of thoroughly enjoying the many games which suggested themselves. Sweets and other presents were given to the children as a supplement to the tea, and a happy time was spent by all.

There is not one in a million of you can ever be great in anything. But because you cannot be Handel or Mozart, is it any reason why you should not learn to sing "God Save the Queen?" Because a girl cannot be a *prima donna* in the Italian opera, is it any reason why she should not learn to play a jig for her brothers and sisters in good time, or a soft little tune for her tired mother, or that she should not sing to please herself among the dew on a May morning?—*Ruskin.*

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY.

A PUBLIC MEETING

TO WELCOME THE

Rev. John Harrison

(THE RECENTLY APPOINTED MISSIONARY AGENT FOR THE MIDLANDS),

WILL BE HELD IN

THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH,

ON MONDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 1895.

CHAIR TO BE TAKEN AT 8 P.M. BY

THE REV. L. P. JACKS, M.A.

The SPEAKERS will be

THE REV. H. ENFIELD DOWSON, B.A.,

(President of the British & Foreign Unitarian Association,)

REVS. JOSEPH WOOD, JAMES C. STREET,

PRIESTLEY SMITH, ESQ.,

AND

THE REV. PROFESSOR ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A.

Who will deliver an ADDRESS on

"Unitarians and Missionary Enterprise."

THE

AUTUMNAL MEETING

OF THE

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION

WILL BE HELD

AT WEST BROMWICH,

ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1895.

CONFERENCE AT 3 O'CLOCK. TEA AT 5-30.

PUBLIC MEETING AT 7 O'CLOCK.

The Revs. L. P. JACKS, M.A., J. C. STREET,

JOSEPH WOOD, E. LUMMIS, B.A.,

AND OTHER FRIENDS WILL ATTEND AND TAKE PART IN THE PROCEEDINGS.